11/30/33

The Editor
The Evening Star

Dear Sir,

With the lemming-like compulsion that characterizes the work of the Warren Commission and in common with most of the press, you persist, in your editorial of Nov.28 in defending the Report by staking the personal integrity of the members of the Commission on it. This is neither logicalk nor right. The Report can be defended only by fact:is it right? You position flys into the face of the entire concept of U.S. law. We do no expect infalliblity of public servants, but we do expect and provide for the rectification of error.

Never before has proclaimed ignorance been accepted as authority, but the papers recently have been full of statements from various officials all, in one form or another saying, "I do not know what I am talking about, but..." And then, it seems, they say the books they haven't read are wrong. I have yet to have an error in WHITEWASH:THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT, called to my attention, andxI have seen to it that most of the people most concerned had copies, that most of the correspondents, reviewers and editors had the first copies.

It is not true that for the Report to be wrong there had to be a monster conspiracy involving everyone from the Chief Justice down to the most junior charwoman in the Department of Justice. To persist in this false and illogical outpouring may well destroy the integrity of the members of the Commission, who can be wrong without being corrupt. It may destroy their defense, which is quite possible. And it may in the end, when the truth is really understood, make the ultimate shock greater and the possibility of public understanding less likely.

Neither in WHITEWASH nor in its coming sequel, WHITEWASH II, do I assault the integrity of the members of the Commission. A careful reading of my work by those not intending to swing axes will show this.

It is time for a little less rhetoric and a little more fact, for an end to

endless non-sequeturs and evasions (I have seen nothing that, I know of nothing that, etc.). It is also time for a little more honesty on the part of those who make their livings writing for newspapers and for the newspapers that make a profit from sales. Is it somehow more reprehensible to be paid for writing a book that it is a news story or an editorial, evil to sell books but not papers and magazines?

But, for the record, with WHITEWASH in 22,500 copies, I have yet to get a cent from my work.

It is also time to stop kidding the people with the childish line about "new evidence". What is wrong with the old evidence that was destroyed, mutilated, misrepresented and ignored?

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg

Dear Mr. Seib,

If this is longer than you had in mind, please cut it as you or whoever handles the letters desires.

I would have liked to have written more, and would particularly like the time to do so. We urgently need an honest dialogue, with the propaganda for once forgotten, or the national trauma that can result is perhaps beyond calculation. In an effort to begin this, I have challenged to debate, in any forum, all those who have written viciously. Not one has accepted, including Merriman Smith, the one man in the world who doesn't know where he was when the President was killed - and he was there and got the Pulitzer Prize for being there! Smith declined to debate me at the National Press Club on his story, my book, the work of the Commission, or any combination of his chosing. He has ignored my alternative challenge, to debate him in writing on his story, with my piece to be submitted to him in advance so that he could use his entire space in refutation. This kind of writing is not helpful.